REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-2, 5-8, 10-18 and 20-24 are pending in the subject application: claims 2 and 10-12 stand rejected. Upon entry of the foregoing amendments, claims 1, 5-8, 13-18, and 20-24 are pending in the application with claim 1 being the only independent claim.

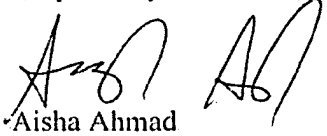
Claim 1 is objected to by the Examiner. Applicants have amended the claim to address the issue raised. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this objection.

In order to expedite prosecution, Applicants have amended claim 1 to overcome the Examiner's objections requiring further definition of "producing a nominal and perturbed version of the mission states..." On page 5, paragraph 0015, the specification states that "mission sensitivity is with respect to the specific perturbation and the specific time at which the perturbation is injected into the path." This concept has been introduced into claim 1 in order to overcome the Examiner's objection. Accordingly, claim 1 is now in condition for allowance, and Applicants respectfully request that claim 1 and all of its dependent claims be allowed in their present form.

On the basis of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration and allowance of this application is believed warranted. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (240) 228-5644.

Applicants hereby petition for any extension of time which may be required to maintain the pendency of this case, and any required fee for such extension is to be charged to Deposit Account No. 01-2218.

Respectfully Submitted,



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AA/jlb
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